Abstract

The paper contributes to the conceptualization of cities in the world by first outlining the conceptual and empirical challenges of theorizing the urban/global nexus in both relational and territorial terms. It argues that the most useful and appropriate approach to understanding contemporary urban governance in global context is to develop a conceptualization that is equally sensitive to the role of relational and territorial geographies, of fixity and flow, of global contexts and place-specificities (and vice versa), of structural imperatives and embodied practices, in the production of cities. In order to illustrate the benefits of this conceptualization, the paper will apply it to the case of how downtown development is governed in many contemporary cities. The role of the Business Improvement District (BID) program and New Urbanist planning models in shaping downtowns will be examined in terms of: (1) how and by whom these models are developed in a global-relational context and are set in motion through scaled circuits...
of policy knowledge and (2) how the mobilization of these models are conditioned by their territorialization in specific spatial and political economic contexts. The paper emphasizes that the "local globalness" of policy models like BIDs and New Urbanism and their consequences for cities can best be understood through a combined focus on relationality and territoriality.

Keywords
Business Improvement Districts; New Urbanism; Mobile policies; Downtown revitalization; Urban politics

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